

Mark your Calendar!



The Branch

An Update for State Offices of Rural Health and our Partners

March 2011

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March 1

- RHC Virtual Conference
Session #1: *Introduction* (2:00 p.m. EST)

March 2

- RHC Virtual Conference
Session #2: *Networking Session* (2:00 p.m. EST)

March 3

- RHC Virtual Conference
Session #3: *Working with RHCs Hands-on* (2:00 p.m. EST)
- Annual Meeting Planning Committee (10:30 EST)
- Joint Committee on Rural Emergency Care (3:00 p.m. EST)

March 8

- Development Committee (2:00 p.m. EST)

March 10

- Communications Committee (3:00 p.m. EST)

March 15

- Policy Committee (2:00 p.m. EDT)

March 22

- Communications Committee (3:00 p.m. EDT)

March 24

- FLEX Committee (3:00 p.m. EDT)

March 31

- Webinar: *UDS Data & Graham Center Resources for Safety Net and Health Workforce Planning* (2:00 p.m. EDT)

Please visit our [News & Events](#) section to learn about these and additional upcoming events.

Policy Update

An update from the NOSORH Policy Committee on ongoing Federal budget discussions:

- FY 2011** – The U.S. House of Representatives passed a budget for the remainder of FY 2011 that called for \$60 billion in cuts. While most existing federally funded rural health programs were not affected, the bill did call for a \$1.3 billion cut in funding to Community Health Centers. That bill must now be reconciled with the U.S. Senate's version of the budget before the current continuing resolution expires

on March 4.

- FY 2012** – President Obama has released his FY 2012 budget that largely holds rural health programs harmless *except* for the proposed elimination of the \$15 million Small Hospital Improvement Program (SHIP). [Click here](#) for a more detailed overview provided by NOSORH Legislative Liaison Bill Finerfrock.

The Policy Committee and SORH representatives from states with U.S. Representatives and Senators serving on appropriations committees have

been communicating with their elected officials to stress the need to maintain funding for rural health-related programs in these budgets. We will continue these efforts and continue to keep you informed. Please contact Policy Committee Co-chairs [Lisa Davis](#) or [Mark Schoenbaum](#) for additional information.

NOSORH also recently conducted a survey regarding federal match levels in the SORH grant reauthorization. Forty-five SORHs responded to the survey; [click here](#) for a summary of results.

NRHA Convenes Meeting between SORHs, Rural Residency Directors

Rural residency directors, SORH leaders and other rural health partners were among those attending the National Rural Health Association's Rural Training Track (RTT) Conclave in Columbus, Ohio on February 17 and 18. SORH representatives from Colorado, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Nebraska, Ohio, South Carolina, Washington and Wisconsin attended the conclave, with Mary Sheridan (Idaho) and Heather Reed (Ohio) presenting examples of their offices' work with rural residencies.

"The sharing of RTT-SORH partnerships was excellent," said Dr. Randall Longanecker, clinical professor of family medicine, assistant dean for rural

medial education at The Ohio State University and *the* champion of the NRHA RTT project. "I hope it will spark interest and creativity in others."

NOSORH recently asked SORHs in states with rural residency programs to share stories about the work they do to promote "rural" within those programs. [Click here](#) to download a synopsis of what your colleagues are doing to reach out and connect with rural residency programs!

NOSORH will also continue to explore opportunities to work with the Rural Assistance Center, WWAMI and NRHA on the NRHA RTT project. Stay tuned for more information on how your SORH

can support rural residency programs; you can also check out RAC's [Rural Training Track Technical Assistance Program](#) web page to learn more.



Heather Reed (Ohio) discusses the importance of linking rural residency programs with SORHs and other rural communities as Drs. Mary Jo Welker and Catherine Lucey (Ohio State University) and other NRHA RTT Conclave panelists listen in.

Get Ready to Celebrate "The Power of Rural!"

Rural communities are a wonderful place to live and work—surprising things are happening in rural America. Being a healthcare provider in rural America offers tremendous opportunities; but, rural communities also face unique healthcare challenges. While we may know this, not everybody does – but hopefully they will later this year after we celebrate the inaugural National Rural Health Day!

Those who attended the NOSORH Annual Conference last November may

recall NOSORH unveiling its plans for the first-ever National Rural Health Day celebration later in 2011. Those plans continue to unfold, thanks to the hard work of the NOSORH Communications Committee. Although we haven't set a date yet, a National Rural Health Day logo and draft key messages have been developed. Over the next few months, we will be developing a toolkit and other resources that SORHs can use to promote National Rural Health Day in their states; we will also be meeting with our rural health partners to

explore how we can join forces.

Stay tuned for more details about this exciting celebration. Feel free to contact Communications Coordinator [Bill Hessert](#) or Communications Committee Co-chair [Karen Madden](#) to learn more.



Upcoming Webinar Focuses on UDS Resources for SORHs

Helping SORHs understand and take advantage of Uniform Data System (UDS) resources to track primary care information in rural areas will be the focus of the next NOSORH educational Webinar.

UDS Data & Graham Center Resources for Safety Net and Health Workforce Planning will take place **Thursday, March 31** at 2:00 p.m. EDT. Dr. Jennifer L. Rankin, project manager for The Robert Graham Center, will discuss the Center's UDS Mapper tool and other UDS resources and training available to SORHs.

Additional information will soon be available in the [Upcoming Events](#) section on the NOSORH website. Feel free to contact [Stephanie Hansen](#) for more information.

Save These Dates

May 24-25

ORHP Region D Meeting
(Henderson, Nevada)

June 13-15

ORHP Region A Meeting (Bar
Harbor, Maine)

July 27-28

ORHP Region E Meeting
(Juneau, Alaska)

August 1-3

ORHP Region B Meeting
(Tampa/St. Petersburg,
Florida)

August 10-11

ORHP Region C Meeting
(Indianapolis, Indiana)

September 7-8

NOSORH Annual Meeting
(Denver, Colorado)

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NOSORH's Newest Award Honors Emerging Leaders

NOSORH will highlight one of its annual awards in each issue of *The Branch* over the next several months. Nominations for 2011 NOSORH Awards can be made anytime; visit the [Awards Committee](#) section of the NOSORH website to download an Awards Nomination Form, award descriptions and a list of previous award winners.

In 2010, NOSORH created its newest award – the **Emerging Leader Award** – to recognize a SORH staff member who has demonstrated new leadership, involvement and commitment to the mission of NOSORH or SORHs. This individual may be a new or existing staff member whose newly demonstrated

passion for, understanding of, and leadership on an issue enhanced education, advocacy or partnerships to improve rural health.

Sharla Allen, manager of the **Wyoming Office of Rural Health**, received the first NOSORH Emerging Leader Award. Although she has only held her position for a little more than two years, Sharla has demonstrated tremendous initiative by reaching out to SORHs, NOSORH, ORHP and others to garner resources for her state. She has participated in, and been a champion of, NOSORH's educational exchange program and Leadership Institute. She also led planning efforts

for an extremely successful ORHP Region E Meeting in Laramie, Wyoming in 2009 despite the meeting occurring very early in her SORH career. Sharla now serves as one of the Region E representatives to the NOSORH Board and as chair of the Awards Committee.

In addition to seeking nominations for NOSORH Awards, the Awards Committee plans to promote SORHs and SORH leaders for national rural health awards and to encourage more SORHs to submit nominations. Please [email Sharla](#) if you would like to nominate a SORH or SORH employee for any NOSORH or national rural health award.

NOSORH Hosting Rural Health Clinic Virtual Conference

Want to understand the role that Rural Health Clinics play in meeting the healthcare needs of rural Americans? Interested in having your State Office of Rural Health develop or expand its technical assistance capacity with RHCs? Then ***Understanding RHCs and How to Work with Them*** is just the conference for you!

The three-day "virtual conference," which will continue **March 2 & 3**, features a mix of online Webinars, group discussions/assignments and networking opportunities that that will provide ideas, tools and coaching for SORHs looking to ramp up their work with RHCs. Each of the three "sessions" begins at 2:00 EST.

Representatives of SORHs seeking to develop/expand its technical assistance capacity with RHCs are invited to attend. Preregistration can be done by [clicking here](#). Additional information can be found the [Upcoming Events](#) section on the NOSORH website.

Tips for Using NOSORH Listservs, Updating SORH Member Directory

NOSORH maintains several listservs that members can use to send messages to NOSORH members or groups of members (i.e., SORH directors, FLEX coordinators, members in specific ORHP regions). Any NOSORH member can send an email to any NOSORH listserv by following these easy steps:

- Click on the appropriate link in the [Using the NOSORH Listserv](#) section of the NOSORH website.
- Be sure your name is included in the [SORH Member Directory](#) and use the email address listed for you in the directory when sending a message; otherwise, your message will not be sent until it receives moderator approval.
- Attachments can be sent along with

your message, but any messages larger than 256KB will also be held until they receive moderator approval.

- **Please** be considerate of other NOSORH members and use "Reply All" sparingly when replying to listserv messages.

NOSORH members are also asked to keep their contact information in the [SORH Member Directory](#) current by doing the following:

- Click on the [Update a Person's Directory Listing](#) on the website;
- Enter your first and last name in the appropriate boxes, click on the "Search" button and then click on your hyperlinked name when it appears;

- Update the appropriate information and then hit the "Request Update" button; your request will be forwarded to [Donna Pfaendtner](#) to be completed.

NOSORH members that wish to "opt-out" of the NOSORH-all listserv can now do so by writing "Please remove me from the NOSORH-all listserv" in the Comments box when updating their directory listing. Please note that you will no longer receive any correspondence sent via the NOSORH-all listserv (including *The Branch*); however, your contact information will still be listed in the [SORH Member Directory](#).

"Straight from the SORHs": News from the State Offices and ORHP

[Mia Patriarca-O'Flaherty](#) has been named acting chief of the **Rhode Island Office of Primary Health and Rural Care**. She replaces [Carla Lundquist](#), who accepted another position within the Rhode Island Department of Health.

[Sonia Medina](#) recently joined the **Arizona Rural Health Office** as a

program coordinator.

The **Oregon Office of Rural Health** recently welcomed [Shellye Dant](#) as its new community grants coordinator. Shellye will oversee coordination of Oregon's Flex and SHIP grants in her new role.

Please contact [Bill Hessert](#) with any news

about you or your SORH to share with your NOSORH colleagues! Also, please contact [Stephanie Hansen](#) when any new employees join your staff so the Educational Exchange Committee can contact them about NOSORH's various educational exchange opportunities.